

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SAB-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OES-06 DLOS-06 SAL-01 IO-13 EB-07

COME-00 /096 W

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P R 201430Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8487

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PN

SUBJECT: "CRITICA" CONTINUES ITS ANTI-US CAMPAIGN: FORTUNA III
CASE

REF: A. PANAM 4982, B. PANAMA 4983

SUMMARY: SATURDAY JULY 17 EDITION OF "CRITICA" DECLARED ITSELF
THE CHAMPION AFTER THREE UNCONTESTED, AND FROM OUR CORNER
UNWANTED, ROUNDS WITH CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES AND EMBASSY.
MONDAY, JULY 19, THE TABLOID GOT IN ANOTHER PUNCH BY SOUNDING
OFF ON THE CASE OF THE PANAMANIAN TUNA BOAT FORTUNA III.
END SUMMARY.

1. HAVING RIGGED LAST WEEK'S MATCH TO BEGIN WITH, POPULAR
PRO-GOP TABLOID "CRITICA" PROCLAIMED ITSELF THE WINNER LAST
SATURDAY WHEN THE HEADLINE TRUMPETED "GRINGO AMBASSADOR
APOLOGIZES TO FOREIGN MINISTRY". FACTS OF AMBASSADOR'S
MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CONSIDERABLY AT VARIANCE WITH
PAPER'S DESCRIPTION OF THEM (SEE REFTELS A AND B).

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2. SWAYED NOT AT ALL BY CONCERNS OF ACCURACY OR RE-

SPONSIBILITY, THE PAPER, IN ITS JULY 19 EDITORIAL DECRIED AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST TO BOYD THAT "CRITICA" STOP INFLATING MINOR INCIDENTS OUT OF PROPORTION, AND TOLD HIM THAT "IT WOULD BE SALUTARY IF HE REALIZE HE'S NOT DEALING WITH A PEOPLE OF CRETINS," ESPECIALLY NOT SINCE THAT PEOPLE HAS PRESS SPOKESMEN LIKE "CRITICA".

3. JULY 19 FRONT PAGE OF THE SAME TABLOID HEADLINED THE LATEST "INCIDENT", THAT OF THE PANAMANIAN TUNA BOAT "FORTUNA III". THE FACTS OF THE CASE, AS KNOWN TO EMBASSY AND PANCANAL FOLLOW IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER:

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14: U.S. DISTRICT COURT, JUDGE GUTHRIE CROWE PRESIDING, ISSUES ORDER TO U.S. MARSHAL TO SEIZE FORTUNA III. (ORDER WAS ISSUED IN A DAMAGE SUIT BROUGHT BY A FORMER CREW MEMBER OF COSTA RICAN NATIONALITY WHO HAD LOST A LEG AS A RESULT OF AN INJURY ABORARD THE BOAT LAST YEAR. CREWMAN WAS FLOWN TO THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR, AT GABRIEL LEWIS' (OWNER) EXPENSE, FOR TREATMENT. HE RETURNED TO PANAMA THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, AND SOUGHT CASH SETTLEMENT OF \$50,000 FROM THE OWNER. LEWIS DECLINED TO PAY THAT SUM. CREWMAN THEN AVAILED HIMSELF OF THE SERVICES OF TWO CANAL ZONE LAWYERS WHO FILED A \$500,000 DAMAGE SUIT, IN REM, ON HIS BEHALF. HENCE THE SEIZURE UNTIL THE MATTER COULD BE ADJUDICATED.)

THURSDAY, JULY 15: EMBASSY INFORMED OF SEIZURE AT 8:15 A.M. DURING THE DAY THE PANCANAL GENERAL COUSEL'S OFFICE REVIEWED THE PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, JULY 16: IN LATE AFTERNOON COURT HELD A PRELIMINARY HEARING TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF BOND. BOND SET AT \$200,000. COURT ALSO GAVE A RELEASE, UNDER SIGNATURE OF THE MASTER, FOR THE BOAT TO BE MOVED FROM THE DOCK TO BALBOA INNER MOORING. BOAT DID SO IN EARLY EVENING.

SATURDAY, JULY 17: SOMETIME IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, BOAT HAULED ANCHOR AND LEFT CANAL ZONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WATERS.

4. FOR THE MOMENT THE U.S. COURT CASE IS MOOT. UNLESS THE BOAT'S OWNERS POST BOND FORTHWITH, THE FORTUNA III WILL BE SUBJECT TO ARREST AND SEIZURE ANY TIME SHE CAN BE FOUND IN CANAL ZONE OR UNITED STATES WATERS.

5. "CRITICA" REPORT DIFFERS -- NATURALLY. PAPER
STATED THAT CREWMEN WERE FORCED TO USE THE "METHOD
ADOPTED BY ISRAELI COMMANDOES IN UGANDA", TO SAVE
THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM "ZONIAN" CONFISCATION. IN
DENOUNCING U.S. COURT SEIZURE, PAPER NOTES THAT "SO
WE SEE, ONCE AGAIN, HOW ZONIAN AUTHORITIES TREAT
PANAMANIAN WORKERS AND BUSINESSMEN." CONTINUING,
ARTICLE ADDS THAT SEAMAN'S COMPENSATION CASE WILL
NOW BE HANDLED BY LABOR MINISTRY.
JORDEN

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